

PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT EMPLOYEES

ON-DUTY ACTIVITIES

In what political activities may a temporary or intermittent Federal employee participate when on duty?

- None; a Federal employee may not engage in partisan political activities while on Government premises or when on duty.

What other limits apply when at work?

- Federal employees *may not*
 - use Government property for political purposes, including equipment, supplies, and services (such as telephone and fax services);
 - use a Government position or influence to interfere with an election or to coerce any person to participate in a political activity;
 - wear a political button on duty;
 - display a partisan banner, sign, sticker, or poster in a Federal office; or
 - consider political affiliation or political activity with regard to a personnel action (except with regard to Schedule C employees and non-career SES appointments).

OFF-DUTY ACTIVITIES

Are there any restrictions on a temporary or intermittent employee's political activities when off duty and off Government premises?

- No. Restrictions on the political activities of employees who serve fewer than 130 days in a 365-day period or who serve on an intermittent basis with an irregular schedule are limited to on-duty conduct or conduct while on Federal premises. When off duty and not on U.S. Government property, such employees may fully participate in partisan political activities, including running for office in a partisan election, soliciting political contributions, or otherwise supporting a candidate or party.

Are these the only restrictions on Federal employees?

- No. Employees are also subject to ethics rules regarding misuse of position (e.g., using public office for personal benefit or for the private gain of others) and misuse of information (e.g., disclosing nonpublic information).

A WORD ABOUT ETHICS

Prepared by the Ethics Division, Office of the Assistant General Counsel for Administration, United States Department of Commerce – January 5, 2006